

COMP PLAN AMENDMENTS, BELTWAY - 2001

PURPOSE OF HEARING:

I understand that the purpose of today's hearing is to focus on **the conformance of the proposed beltway amendments to the 1994 Comp Plan, and that the purpose is not to focus on the accuracy of the DEIS.** Given that directive, my purpose today is to support the Staff recommendation that the 141st (east-far) beltway is not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

A FEW BACKGROUND COMMENTS

I have not served on any beltway committees but I have been a close observer and citizen participant of the process for the last three years or so. I am supporting the Staff recommendation for these reasons:

I have tried to keep myself current on the details in **the beltway study documents**, including studying and responding, as per the study team's request, to the 1998 MEASURED VALUES CHART, the 1998 FINAL HISTORIC SURVEY, the 1999 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF ADVERSE EFFECTS ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES, and the 2001 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT / 4(F) / FINAL ADVERSE IMPACTS STATEMENTS. I have also read the 30-some citizen responses provided for the 1999 report and the dozens of oral and written responses for the recent March report. I realize that there may be additional public responses, but these responses are the ones used for the public record.

When the Comp Plan Amendments were made available in June, I reviewed **the 1994 Comp Plan** to find references related to transportation, ag land uses, and contiguous growth.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the work I have done and the directions for today's hearing, I note the following: **The beltway amendments and supporting statements very effectively bring together 1) the extensive work of the study committee(s) and 2) the Comp Plan goals and strategies.** In doing this, the staff provides convincing and adequate support for the recommendation to deny conformity of the east-far route.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 141ST/148TH STREET

I have several observations to make about the 141st Street route that I assume is more noticeable to someone familiar with the area than to someone writing a report about it. My observations provide additional support for the staff position of non-conformance of the east-far route.

The paving and construction work on the two-lane paved 148th Street has recently been completed. The road runs from Highway 2 on the south to Waverly on the North. Since its completion, the traffic on the road, much of which appears to be work-related commuter travel, has increased.

The proposed 141st Street beltway would be approximately 1/2 mile from 148th, running parallel to existing 148th for the full length of 148th, for 12 miles more or less (*SEE DEIS, FIGURE 2.6*).

Having two major road ways in such close proximity to each other creates a significant negative impact on this half mile island between the two routes. With major roadway 148th on the east and a heavily traveled beltway on the west, this area would have compound traffic impacts. It is reasonable to project a) the exit of current rural residents seeking the rural character they now enjoy and b) pressure for high intensity land uses in this high intensity traffic island. The community, in its planning process, will likely accept the idea that the highest and best use of this area is either commercial and/or industrial. It would take a small miracle, I think, to avoid creeping urban sprawl throughout this area.

A second concern that I have for this area is for the national landmarks. **All of the already identified national landmarks as well as those eligible for landmark status on the EF1 route reside in this area; the farm with national landmark status is immediately adjacent** (*SEE DEIS, FIGURE 2.25*). To site a beltway at 141st Street without projecting the cumulative impacts based on the existence of two adjacent roadways seems to me to be short-sighted. I have requested that this matter be attended to when the Final DEIS is prepared.

As a sidebar, I would also like to comment about **the use of 148th as a future beltway**. I found the brief discussion on pages 2.45 and 2.46 in the *DEIS* very informative on this matter. Due to its brevity, however, I understand why some individuals might think that 148th would suffice as the east link to a circumferential beltway.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

IN SUMMARY THEN, I AGREE WITH THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY TEAMS AND STAFF THAT THE EAST-FAR ROUTE IS NOT IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

-- ELEANOR FRANCKE